

## NEJAC Cumulative Risks/Cumulative Impacts Charge

In 2003, the Agency will be issuing the “Cumulative Risk Assessment Framework.”\* In that document, the Agency described various features of a cumulative risk assessment as follows: (a) multiple stressors; (b) consideration of how stressors act together, rather than individually; and (c) a population-focused assessment which means that the characteristics of that population needs to be defined and multiple stressors are assessed with regard to impact on that population, although not every individual will see the same (or all) effects.

The Agency, therefore, is asking the NEJAC to provide advice and recommendations on the following questions:

- (1) How should the Agency proactively address the issue of using the various existing statutory authorities and their implementing regulations relating to cumulative risks which were identified by the Environmental Law Institute in their November 2001 research report entitled, “*Opportunities for Advancing Environmental Justice: An Analysis of U.S. EPA Statutory Authorities*”?
- (2) How should additional factors such as: (a) multiple durations, pathways, sources, or routes of exposure; (b) multiple effects or impacts; (c) nonconventional stressors or risk factors (e.g., lifestyles, access to health care); and (d) quantification of risks, be considered when conducting a cumulative risk assessment of vulnerable minority, indigenous, and/or low-income communities disproportionately exposed to environmental harms and risks, and cumulative impacts? In addition, what short-term actions should the Agency take to ensure that it can proactively respond to community concerns about the above-stated factors, in parallel with Agency efforts to develop adequate scientific methodology for conducting cumulative risk assessments?
- (3) How should the Agency ensure that differences in vulnerability of certain segments of the population are incorporated into the cumulative risk assessment? In addition, what short-term actions should the Agency take to ensure that it can proactively respond to community concerns related to vulnerability, in parallel with Agency efforts to develop adequate scientific methodology for incorporating this factor in cumulative risk assessments?
- (4) How can the Agency promote more effective participation by vulnerable minority, indigenous, and/or low-income communities disproportionately exposed to environmental harms and risks, and cumulative impacts to improve community health through cumulative risk assessment, particularly during the planning, scoping, and problem formulation phase of a cumulative risk assessment?

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\* When this is issued formally, we will change this to reflect the specific date of issuance.

(5) How can the Agency partner with an affected community to more effectively use the results of a cumulative risk assessment to develop appropriate intervention and prevention strategies, including use of models of conducting cumulative risk assessment that promote communities and technical experts working and reaching decisions together?

In sum, in order to ensure environmental justice for all communities, what short-term and long-term actions should the Agency take in proactively implementing the concepts contained in its Cumulative Risk Assessment Framework (i.e., using the concepts of cumulative risk to determine: (a) disproportionate exposure to multiple stressors; (b) the resulting cumulative impacts; and (c) developing appropriate intervention and prevention strategies)?